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BY

GORDON CRAIG

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FOREWORD.

The designs and models in the Gallery speak for themselves. Is it necessary to remind the onlooker that they were made for the theatre, and that many have been applied in the theatres on the Continent?

The drawings and models for "Macbeth" were made on request of a London management, and my only regret is that I found it necessary to withdraw them.

E. G. C.

25 July 1868

13 May 1849. Foundation

CATALOGUE.

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No.

1. MACBETH. Act I., Scene 6. The Castle.

(There is a Model of this scene in the Gallery.)

I designed this scene for the poet, not for the actor or the actress, for in it the following lines are spoken:—

“This castle hath a pleasant seat ; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his lov'd mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here : no jutting, frieze,
Buttress nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant
cradle :

Where they most breed and haunt, I have
observ'd,

The air is delicate.”

The obvious thing that the London critic may say is that you cannot get such a height on the actual stage, and the surprising answer is that you cannot—in London. Somehow or other, a sense of space is a thing seldom attempted by anyone in London. Those who have visited Italy, for instance, notice how we dwarf our triumphal arches and our castle walls.* It is all rather neat here in London.

* Off the stage as well as on.

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You may say that would in no wise prevent a stage carpenter from being able to realise the immensity of the walls before him. But I am afraid I must suggest that you are wrong, for stage carpenters are as impressionable as yourself, and they have at last been convinced that space is a thing which does not exist.

In some of the theatres on the Continent they have got past this difficulty, and yet without robbing the actor, the stage manager and the call boy of their employments.

2. **MACBETH.** Act V., Scene 5.

“To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time ;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty earth. Out, out, brief candle !

The aim of the designer has been to conceive some background which would not offend whilst these lines were being spoken, and a background which would help the actor to speak these lines. I have heard both actors and actresses say that these scenes of mine leave nothing for the actors to do. I wonder if the public agrees with them. If it is true then the lines of Shakespeare leave them still less to do.

3. **MACBETH.** Act I., Scene 5.

(There is a Model of this scene in the Gallery.)

“Enter Lady Macbeth, reading a letter.”

This scene is designed to take up a very little room on the stage. As former stage managers have placed Lady Macbeth in this scene by the side of a fire, which makes things a bit lurid, I thought perhaps people would be glad to get away from that. So I conducted the lady to her bedroom, which is hung with red and is altogether a

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mysterious room, the only fresh thing being the sunlight which comes in. This was also designed for the sake of the actress. I thought that if she could read this letter from her husband while standing in her small room, leaning against the post of her bed, with the familiar objects of her life about her, she would feel more comfortable, and we also. I wonder if I did wrong !

4. MACBETH. A Witch.

5. MACBETH. Dedicated to Alexandre Dumas, père.

6. THE LANTERN BEARERS.

7. MACBETH. Act II.

This illustrates the moment after the murder of King Duncan, when Macduff calls up the sleeping house from their beds. It is a moment generally spoilt by the actors who impersonate those who have only just been awoke, and appearing as though they had been wide awake all the time and only waiting at the wings for the whistle.

The passage in Shakespeare runs :—

Awake, awake !

Ring the alarum-bell—murder and treason !

Banquo and Donalbain ! Malcolm ! awake !

Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,

And look on death itself ! Up, up and see

The great doom's image ! Malcolm ! Banquo !

As from your graves rise up ; and walk like
sprites

To countenance this horror !

8. MACBETH. Act I., Scene 1.

(There is a Model of this scene in the Gallery.)

No.

9. HAMLET. Act I., Scene 1. Designed for the Moscow Art Theatre.

I show here, for the first time, a design which I made for the production of *Hamlet* which I prepared for the Moscow Art Theatre. In this play I make use of a scenic invention which, on account of its simplicity and its rhythmic quality, and owing to its infinite capability of changing the effect without changing the scene itself, I call "*The Scene for the Poetic Drama.*" It is this scene which the Irish National Theatre did me the honour of accepting, and which has been used by Mr. W. B. Yeats and Lady Gregory with no small success in Dublin.

10. MACBETH.

11. MACBETH. Act II.

(There are two Models of this scene in the Gallery.)

This is known as the "Murder Scene." I hope it is vast enough and simple enough. I hope no one feels that it resembles that curious stuff known to the middle class as "l'art nouveau." I mention this because an actor-manager I once knew made this mistake.

12. MASQUE OF LONDON. The Roofs.

13. DESIGN FOR A STAGE SCENE. Palace, Path and Slum.

I was once asked how I should suggest in one and the same scene an exterior of a palace, the exterior of a house in a slum, and the common meeting ground of the two classes which inhabit both.

The above was an attempt to suggest the three things. The staircase seems to me the only meeting place common to both classes, for it is that path by which you ascend or descend.

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14. DESIGN FOR A STAGE SCENE AND MOVEMENT.
Psyche.

A design for a drama on the subject of Cupid and Psyche. This represents the moment when Psyche in the house is "beset with doubts and fears."

15. A MARIONETTE. Representing "Hunger."

This and Nos. 22, 24, 28 and 31 are prints taken from some small wooden marionettes which I designed and cut when preparing different plays from 1907 to 1910.

16. MACBETH. Act V., Scene 1.

Lo you, here she comes !

This is her very guise ; and, upon my life,
fast asleep.

This is the scene known as the "Sleep-walking Scene." We have large theatres, and especially when we produce *Macbeth*, and so it would hardly be fair on the actress who plays the part of Lady Macbeth to expect her, unaided, to give to the audience the enormous impression which Shakespeare gives to the reader. If an actress could do such a thing, of course there would be no need for what is called scenery. As it is, there is a great need for scenery, and, therefore, the better the scenery, the better for the play. This scene was designed for the actress ; it purposes to assist her. If you will look at it, you will see where she is entering. She has but to go forward, in one hand a lamp, the other hand feeling her way. Her progress is a curve, she seems to come from the past into the present and go away into the future. That part from which she comes I have drawn in precise and sharp lines ; that part to which she goes is designed with vague and bending lines.

A representative theatrical manager to whom I showed this scene saw nothing in it but a pillar and some space,

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and he said, "How nice it would be to move the pillar over to the side of the scene, and to use it for where I come in with the daggers."

And yet there are still some fanatics who assert that there is nothing the matter with the modern English stage!—

17. **MACBETH.** Detail for Act V., Scene 1.

In the design for the Sleep-walking Scene (No. 16) is the indication of many sculptured figures at the base of the large central column. This second design is to show two of those figures in detail. They represent the figures of the ancient Kings and Queens of Scotland. As the sleeping woman descends the stairway with her lamp, she feels her way with her right hand, touching each figure, lighting them as she passes—she who sleeps seems to awaken to a momentary life the dead king or queen as she stands near it with her lamp, which casts a faint, warm light—as she passes the life passes—and when she has gone from the scene all life has gone from the figures—once more they have become cold history.

18. **HENRY V.** The Tents.

+ 19. **HENRY V.** Entrance of the Army.

20. **THE TRIBUNAL.**

21. **DESIGN FOR A STAGE SCENE AND MOVEMENT.**
The Steps.

One of four designs for a drama I created called *The Steps*. I call it a drama because acts are performed upon these steps—not because something is *said* upon them. Let a person relate in the most perfect words how some-

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one walked up steps and no drama is either created or performed. The distinction between literature and drama is as simple as it is profound.

22. MARIONETTES. The Poet and his Memory.

23. DESIGN FOR A STAGE SCENE.

24. MARIONETTES. The Fencers.

25. THE TEMPEST.

A design needing considerable explanation, but if I may be ungallant enough to say so, I would prefer this time to reserve the little secret of what I mean by it, and how I mean to carry it out, until I have the happiness and opportunity of doing this upon a stage of my own.

26. CÆSAR AND CLEOPATRA. (*Bernard Shaw*).

This is the last moment in the play. Cæsar has gone down the steps to the quay, has gone on board, and you see the white sails moving away. The moment that they commence to move, the gigantic yellow soldiers of Egypt return again to the house, and, in the middle of these, the little figure of Cleopatra is seen skipping up the steps. Impertinence triumphs!

27. DIDO AND ÆNEAS. Act III., Scene 1. The Ships.

This was designed for the great national opera by Purcell, which is never (if it can be helped) presented to the nation by the nation. I helped once in a production of this noble masterpiece; I used a different scene to the one

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here depicted, but if I were asked to help once more in the production, I should employ this design. It represents the scene where the sailors sing that lusty English chorus, "Come away, fellow sailors." In the foreground is a mass of black wreckage—Flotsam and Jetsam. In it the witches are huddled together. Do you remember the situation? No? And yet Purcell is the greatest musical genius of England, and his works are worth knowing.

28. MARIONETTES. From "The Venetian Comedy."

29. JULIUS CÆSAR. Act II., Scene 2.

30. HAMLET. Act I., Scene 2.

This design, showing the same invention as No. 9 in a different form. The change from its first form shown in No. 9 to its second shown here, takes about fifteen seconds, and is done without lowering the curtain or the lights.

31. MARIONETTE. From "The Egyptian Sacrifice."

32. HAMLET. Act II.

The use of curtains as stage scenery offers certain possibilities to the artist. If over done or used carelessly, as so often has been the case in the last ten years, the effect is apt to strike the beholder as what is known as "artistic." This is an effect everyone should strive to avoid. The word "artistic" is a new word, and amongst artists is never made use of, for it has been applied indiscriminately to all self-conscious attempts of the ignorant to create things of beauty; it is often applied to productions of Shakespeare. One hears people saying of a man, "Oh, he is very artistic." Why say that? Why

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not say he is an artist and have done with it? I think that ladies and dandies have invented this word "artistic" so that they might apply it to each other. The word is elastic. It can mean anything . . . and be applied to anybody, and now that it is used by everybody it means just what anybody wishes. A policeman cannot be an artist because he already has a profession, a trade; but added to his law and orderliness he can be "very, or, rather artistic." Judges, countesses, sportsmen, editors, princes and shop-keepers cannot be called artists, but because they have a just amount of decent taste they claim to be "artistic."

33. ELECTRA.

34. MASQUE OF LONDON. Wapping Old Stairs.

Quite an impossible scene; that is to say, impossible to realise on any stage. But I wanted to know for once what it felt like to be mounting up impossible ladders and beckoning to people to come up too.

35. ROMEO AND JULIET.

36. HAMLET. Act I., Scene 5.

37. JULIUS CÆSAR. The Forum.

Here we see Mark Antony addressing half Rome. A hundred thousand citizens are seen at the back; Mark Antony leans towards them and away from us, and you hear his shrill, high voice. In the front, nearest us, there is silence. There the conspirators wait.

There is no example of Roman architecture here because I could find none in Shakespeare. All I felt was

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the crowd of the two parties. I had to bring all these in and divide them so that we should feel the divisions clearly. I put the crowd farthest off because, although a hundred thousand voices can drown one voice when it is between you and the speaker, still a hundred thousand voices make an excellent background to the voice of a personality. For instance, I never knew distant thunder, however mighty it was, to interrupt a conversation.

38. HAMLET. Act I., Scene 1.

The four designs for *Hamlet* I designed in 1904, and I admit I did not think of the expression on the actor's face. I was thinking of the expression on the face of the play, and I was thinking of the words of the play, and I was also thinking of the actor's voice, or, rather, *an* actor's voice—Tomasso Salvini's.

The Germans in Berlin seem to think I was thinking of them, and their peculiar way of shouting and waving the arms. But if there is anyone who remembers Salvini, he will understand what I mean by these designs.

39. HAMLET. Act I., Scene 4.

40. HAMLET. Act IV., Scene 5.

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